

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An isolated bacterial strain, ~~characterized in that it is~~
~~which is a *Exiguobacterium* of the *lactigenes* strain and in that it has,~~

said isolated bacterial strain comprising a 16S rRNA sequence of SEQ ID NO:1
or a 16S rRNA sequence having more than 97% similarity to SEQ ID NO:1.

said isolated bacterial strain further comprising a DNA sequence, at least part of
which is capable of hybridizing with genomic or plasmid DNA of the strain deposited on
December 5, 2002, under the No. I-2962, with the Collection Nationale de Cultures de
Microorganismes (C.N.C.M.) ~~[French national collection of microorganism cultures],~~

said isolated bacterial strain being thermoresistant, saccharolytic and amylolytic
and/or capable of producing L(+) lactate, and

having growth properties at temperatures of 40 to 50°C ~~the order of 40 to 50°C~~, at
a pH of 5.4 to 9.15, with an optimum for growth at 45°C, at a pH of approximately 7, and
a guanine plus cytosine content ~~[[in]]~~ of its DNA of approximately 50 mol%.

Claims 2-3. (Canceled)

Claims 4-7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) ~~[[The]]~~ An isolated bacterial strain deposited with the
C.N.C.M. on December 5, 2002, under the number I-2962.

Claims 9-11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) The bacterial strain as claimed in claim 1, wherein said 16S rRNA sequence is SEQ ID NO:1~~characterized by the sequence SEQ ID NO: 1 of~~
~~the 16S rRNA.~~